

REMARKS

Claims 20-54 are pending. By this Amendment, claims 49-54 are added. Reconsideration in view of the above amendments and the following remarks are respectfully requested.

Applicants appreciate the indication that claims 39-48 are allowed, and that claims 25-36 would be allowable if placed into independent form. However, for the reasons described below, Applicants have not amended independent claim 20 to include any of the indicated allowable subject matter.

Claims 20-24, 36 and 37 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(c) over Hayashi et al. (U.S. Patent No. 7,207,083). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

As shown in Figure 7(a), Hayashi et al. discloses a cyclonic separation cylinder 104 including an inlet port 115 through which dust laden air enters and is upwardly directed in a swirling fashion to centrifugally separate dust from the air and carry the dust into a dust collecting case 105 through communication port 117 on the upper part of the cylinder. The cleaned air is sent through a passage 120 provided underneath the cylinder 106 through an inner cylinder 131. The dirty air carried into the dust collection case is filtered by a first auxiliary filter 106. The filtered air is sucked into motor-driven blower 107 through communicating port 146 (behind the first auxiliary filter 106) and second auxiliary filter 112. An additional filter 108 is provided downstream of motor 107. See column 4, lines 32-50.

Thus, Hayashi et al. does not teach or suggest the removable dust collecting receptacle of claim 20 including a second dust collecting compartment at least partially collecting the second dust fraction separated by the separating device. In the Office Action (page 2), the Examiner has alleged that Hayashi et al. discloses a second dust collecting compartment, but does not assign any reference number to that compartment, unlike the first collecting department which the Examiner has identified as element 105. Moreover, Hayashi et al. does not teach the separation of dust laden air into two fractions, e.g., coarse dust and fine dust, and the first and second dust compartments, respectively, that collect the first and second dust fractions. Hayashi et al. only teaches the separation of a single generic dust from the dust laden air, and as such the exit filter suffers from

clogging problems associated with fine dust per page 7, lines 5-10 of the original specification.

In addition, Hayashi et al. does not teach the subject matter of the dependent claims. For example, claim 24 specifies that the separate device is arranged between the dust separator in at least one of the first dust collecting department and the second dust collecting department. In the Office Action, the Examiner identifies filter 112 as the “separating device”. However, the separating device is not arranged between the dust separator and the first dust collecting department, or the dust separator and the second dust collecting department.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

Claims 49-54 are presented for the Examiner's consideration and include features that even further distinguish over Hayashi et al.

Applicants respectfully request entry of the present Amendment. If the Examiner has any questions regarding this amendment, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned. If an extension of time for this paper is required, petition for extension is enclosed.

Respectfully submitted,

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